



TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Economic Development
Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Room 312

March 29, 2018

5:30 PM

Minutes

In attendance: Dallas Dodge (Chair), Ben Wenograd, Chris Barnes, Mary Fay, Shari Cantor (phone), Beth Kerrigan (phone), Liam Sweeney (phone), Matt Hart, Mark McGovern, Todd Dumais and Kristen Gorski.

1. Call to Order: 5:35

2. Staff Reports

Kristen Gorski provided an overview of her work with the business community. She has 65 clients, including restaurants, gyms, retailers, etc. Most are looking for space but there are few availabilities. Ms. Gorski highlighted activity in each business district.

Mark McGovern gave an update on real estate projects under construction including 616 New Park, Arlington Road and Gledhill Estates. Staff is expecting SDD applications for New Britain Ave./Berkshire and Park/Prospect in the near future.

3. UCONN West Hartford Campus Property

a. MMI Report (Attachment, pg. 2)

Matt Hart opened the discussion on the UConn Outreach project which included an online survey and multiple public community forums, resulting in the draft report received by the Committee.

The Committee asked for and the staff provided a high level review of the report findings. Todd Dumais explained that the report summarized the findings from the survey and community forum polling data, found in the appendixes. The results of the survey and polling were similar.

There was a general consensus that the campus could support some grand list growth and it should be considered as two separate parcels. Respondents liked the green space and want the natural resources protected. Recreation, passive use and cultural uses were most supported and high intensity uses such as professional offices, medical offices and a hotel were least supported.

Based on the findings, a Vision Statement was crafted that tried to balance growth with protection of resources and community use. Six Guiding Principles drilled down further.

Mr. Hart explained to the Council that the adoption of the Vision Statement and principles will inform a prospective buyer and be helpful towards a future land use application.

Councilor Dodge asked staff what was missing in terms uses, town wide. Mr. McGovern noted office space within the commercial sector but it brings neighborhood challenges such as increased traffic and parking. In the residential market, there is demand for condominiums but they are a higher risk for developers. Mr. Dumais added the lack of a large recreation center and cultural amenities.

Mr. Barnes asked how the Vision Statement would be used by staff, who responded that it would be a tool used alongside zoning regulations and SDD requirements. The statement is not believed to be heavy handed.

Councilor Dodge asked that the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles be placed on the next Council Agenda.

b. Other:

Mr. Hart provided an update on the Campus. UConn is talking to few interested parties but has not executed a purchase and sale agreement or Letter of Intent. If they do not come to terms with a buyer, the Town could look at doing a RFP with UConn's permission.

The environmental status of the property was discussed. Based on staff knowledge, there is little risk of the contamination spreading but the State DEEP is interested in limiting access with fencing.

4. Adjournment: 6:40